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NEWS RELEASE

Nov. 7, 2002

Contact: Professor Rhea Ashmore, chair of curriculum and instruction, UM School of Education, 243-6170.

UM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION FORMS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

MISSOULA --

Representatives from Zhejiang University in the People's Republic of China were in Missoula this month to formalize an agreement between The University of Montana School of Education and their university's College of Education. The agreement will encourage and support faculty members and students from both universities to engage in collaborative research projects and exchange programs.

Dean Zhengping Tian, Vice Dean Guping Zhou and Associate Professor Weiping Zhao represented Zhejiang University's College of Education. They met with Roberta Evans, dean of UM's School of Education; Professor Rhea Ashmore, chair of curriculum and instruction; UM Provost and Academic Vice President Lois Muir; and UM President George Dennison and others Nov. 2 for the formal signing of the agreement.

"This was the first trip to the United States for Dean Tian and Vice Dean Zhou," said Ashmore, who has worked closely with the members of the Chinese delegation since making the first of four trips to Zhejiang Province as a visiting scholar in 1997. "The delegates attended both the UM-Northern Arizona football game and a pregame brunch before the formal signing of the agreement at dinner that evening."

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The new partnership is an extension of a formal exchange agreement between the two universities that was signed this spring, when Ashmore hand-delivered the document while on sabbatical teaching at Zhejiang University.

“The People’s Republic of China has mandated that all schools teach English beginning in grade three by the year 2005,” Ashmore said. “Many of the schools in the larger cities have already included classes to teach English in their curricula. In addition to research opportunities and faculty exchanges, this new partnership opens another door for adventurous education majors to complete requirements for student teaching or secondary certification abroad.”

The new agreement is the first international partnership for both UM’s School of Education and Zhejiang University’s College of Education, Ashmore said.

“Throughout his tenure as president of The University of Montana, George Dennison has expanded the mission and role of our campus abroad,” Muir said during the signing ceremony. “He believes in building bridges with other intellectually vibrant universities around the globe, and he understands that such bridges often begin with collaborative work among scholars.”

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